Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) A seatback for a vehicle seat, the seatback having an integrated protective device, comprising:

a lower back part adapted to be joined to a seat part;

an upper back part that is pivotable relative to the lower back part out of a normal use position, about an axis extending in the seatback transversely to a longitudinal vehicle axis, through an angular range in a pivoting direction pointing in a direction of vehicle travel, as a result of a torque acting in the pivoting direction, into a safety position;

a device for generating the torque, wherein the torque-generating device is constituted by a preloaded spring element or multiple preloaded spring elements;

means for detecting a rear-end impact; and

immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position;

wherein the device for generating the torque comprises a force storage device or an energy storage device acting irrespective of any occupancy of the vehicle seat, the means for detecting a rear-end impact comprising a vehicle crash sensor and the immobilization means comprising a lever system, the vehicle crash sensor being in effective connection with the force storage device or the energy storage device, and with the lever system constituting the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part, such that in the event of the rear-end impact, the retention of the upper back part in the normal use position is nullified, the force storage device or the energy storage device is activated, and the upper back part is pivoted in the pivoting direction.

28. (Previously Presented) The seatback of Claim 27, wherein the spring element is constituted by a torsion spring arranged in the pivot axis.

29. (Previously Presented) The seatback of Claim 27, wherein the means for detecting a rear-end impact is in effective connection with the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position, and immobilization means is in effective connection with the torque-generating device, in such a way that in the event of the impact, the preloaded spring element is released by the immobilization means.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) A seatback for a vehicle seat, the seatback having an integrated protective device, comprising:

a lower back part adapted to be joined to a seat part;

an upper back part that is pivotable relative to the lower back part out of a normal use position, about an axis extending in the seatback transversely to a longitudinal vehicle axis, through an angular range in a pivoting direction pointing in a direction of vehicle travel, as a result of a torque acting in the pivoting direction, into a safety position;

a device for generating the torque;

means for detecting a rear-end impact; and

immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position;

wherein the device for generating the torque comprises a force storage device or an energy storage device acting irrespective of any occupancy of the vehicle seat, the means for detecting a rear-end impact comprising a vehicle crash sensor and the immobilization means comprising a lever system, the vehicle crash sensor being in effective connection with the force storage device or the energy storage device, and with the lever system constituting the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part, such that

in the event of the rear-end impact, the retention of the upper back part in the normal use position is nullified, the force storage device or the energy storage device is activated, and the upper back part is pivoted in the pivoting direction;

wherein the lever system of the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position is constituted by at least two coacting levers.

32–35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Presented) A seatback for a vehicle seat, the seatback having an integrated protective device, comprising:

a lower back part adapted to be joined to a seat part;

an upper back part that is pivotable relative to the lower back part out of a normal use position, about an axis extending in the seatback transversely to a longitudinal vehicle axis, through an angular range in a pivoting direction pointing in a direction of vehicle travel, as a result of a torque acting in the pivoting direction, into a safety position;

a device for generating the torque;

means for detecting a rear-end impact; and

immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position;

wherein the device for generating the torque comprises a force storage device or an energy storage device acting irrespective of any occupancy of the vehicle seat, the means for detecting a rear-end impact comprising a vehicle crash sensor and the immobilization means comprising a lever system, the vehicle crash sensor being in effective connection with the force storage device or the energy storage device, and with the lever system constituting the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part, such that in the event of the rear-end impact, the retention of the upper back part in the normal use

position is nullified, the force storage device or the energy storage device is activated, and the upper back part is pivoted in the pivoting direction;

wherein the lever system is constituted by a pawl, mounted pivotably in the upper back part, wherein the pawl in a locked position braces against a counterbearing that is stationary relative to the upper back part; and by a pivotably mounted immobilization lever that in a locked position engages into the pawl, and in a release position releases the pawl.

37. (Previously Presented) The seatback of Claim 36, wherein the lever system is mounted in side walls of a holding part arranged in the upper back part.

38. (Previously Presented) The seatback of Claim 37, wherein the counterbearing is arranged at an upper end of a support part that is immovably joined at the other end to the lower back part and projects into the holding part, and is constituted by a stop surface for a lobe of the pawl arranged approximately at an unattached lever end.

39-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previously Presented) A seatback for a vehicle seat, the seatback having an integrated protective device, comprising:

a lower back part adapted to be joined to a seat part;

an upper back part that is pivotable relative to the lower back part out of a normal use position, about an axis extending in the seatback transversely to a longitudinal vehicle axis, through an angular range in a pivoting direction pointing in a direction of vehicle travel, as a result of a torque acting in the pivoting direction, into a safety position;

a device for generating the torque;

means for detecting a rear-end impact; and

immobilization means for retention of the upper back part in the normal use position;

wherein the device for generating the torque comprises a force storage device or an energy storage device acting irrespective of any occupancy of the vehicle seat, the means for detecting a rear-end impact comprising a vehicle crash sensor and the immobilization means comprising a lever system, the vehicle crash sensor being in effective connection with the force storage device or the energy storage device, and with the lever system constituting the immobilization means for retention of the upper back part, such that in the event of the rear-end impact, the retention of the upper back part in the normal use position is nullified, the force storage device or the energy storage device is activated, and the upper back part is pivoted in the pivoting direction;

further comprising a second immobilization means for retention of the upper back part against a backward motion out of the safety position into the normal use position;

wherein the second immobilization means is configured as a snap-locking ratchet mechanism having at least one ratchet tooth set attached within the holding part, and having at least one tooth functioning as a counterpart ratchet element, arranged on the support part.

42-46. (Cancelled)